



Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan Public Meeting Round #2

Northwest Planning Area

Meeting Date: August 17, 2006
Meeting Time: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Location: Kennesaw Community Center
2753 Watts Drive
Kennesaw, GA 30144
Attendance: 22

Agenda

Welcome and Opening Remarks..... David Montayne
Highlights from Outreach Activities..... Morris Dillard
Status of Random Opinion SurveyHarry McGinnis
Draft, Vision, Goals and StrategiesHarry McGinnis
Update on Technical AnalysisRod Wilburn
Public Comments
Closing

Meeting Summary

Participants were asked to sign in upon arrival and were provided with project materials including a fact sheet, glossary of transportation & land use planning terms, public meeting schedule, comment sheet, public meeting evaluation form and a meeting agenda. Area maps were on display for participants to review.

David Montayne opened the meeting. He recognized and thanked Commissioner Goreham and Councilman Bruce Jenkins for their interest and attendance. Members of the Project Management Team and the Stakeholder Coordinating Committee were introduced before turning the meeting over to Rod Wilburn of the project consulting team of Carter and Burgess.

Rod Wilburn explained technical terms that would be used throughout the presentation some of which may be unfamiliar to the audience. He then discussed level of service (LOS), which defines the speed at which traffic flows on a roadway. The ppt. presentation is enclosed and made a part of the record copy of these notes.

The participants were invited to ask questions. Following is a record of the questions/comments and responses.

Question: Do you have baseline LOS figures for 2000?

Answer: Yes we do. This information is available and will be placed on the web site.

Question: Has there been a significant change in the congested speed?

Answer: Yes, however, these LOS numbers do not include the projects that have been added to improve speed. In 1998, the average speed was 30 miles per hour and in 2005, it dropped to 25 miles per hour.



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Question: Did you look at average commute time?

Answer: We have the speed for different corridors that are reflective of commute time. We also have average commute time.

Question: In your scenario, what will you say are problems on major arteries?

Answer: The map of the Northwest Cobb Planning Area shows that level-of-service (LOS) F will be more prevalent with increased population growth by 2030 than it is today. As we look to the future many of the corridors that are in current condition of LOS E have turned to LOS F based on population growth. The condition will be more congestion, longer travel times and increased miles of travel.

Question: On the travel demand model slide for 2030 projections, how do we account for the wide discrepancy in ARC's projections for population and employment growth from 2000 to 2030 and what you are showing?

Answer: This information presented is a "what if" scenario that was developed in coordination with the County/City planning staffs. City and County staffs reflected on the current requests for permits along with what they know is in the works for future development. ARC's numbers reflect a different approach to population and employment growth that takes into account national trends and regional trends. It is not unusual for regional forecasts to differ from local projections because of the difference in methodologies.

There is often a difference in opinion between local planning staffs on planning and growth. ARC looks at a broader perspective from a top down view. The U.S. growth in employment and population is then bumped down to the local area. ARC will consult with local counties regarding the distribution of population and employment, as well as in the control totals developed for each County but there is likely to be disagreement.

Question: What is currently in place to be done in the next 18 months? What is funded and what is not?

Answer: In Cobb County, projects totaling \$800 million are planned for the next 6-8 years using the SPLOTS (i.e. Giles Road and Lake Acworth Drive). Seventy of the projects are underway, for example 15-20 are in the right-of-way (ROW) acquisition stage necessary for capacity improvement. See CobbDOT.org under SPLOTS for project updates.

Comment: Part of the problem relates to all of the traffic that is flowing through I-75 that is not local in origin.

Response: The study recognizes that there is through-traffic traveling in Cobb corridors. We look at these corridors to try to determine a solution. We can get from the model the percentage of trips that originate within Cobb or have a destination in Cobb. This information will be an important factor in developing our recommendations.

Question: Have you thought about travel alternatives for short distances to assist seniors in getting around?

Answer: Cobb County is conducting Senior Transportation Study that will conclude at about the same time as the CTP. The plan is to make the recommendations from this Study part of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan's recommendations.

Question: Did you look at the ability of the fire and emergency services to get around?

Answer: We are looking at the entire network and will overlay potential problem areas for emergency vehicles (hospitals, schools and activity centers and other potential bottlenecks) on a



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map. Where potential problem areas exist, appropriate solutions will be recommended. The transportation network must be able to accommodate emergency vehicles.

Question: On Barrett Parkway/Dallas/Interstates there is a problem getting from one side of the street to the other. Is consideration being given to tunnels or bridges to allow pedestrians and personal transportation vehicles to cross and avoid conflict with vehicular traffic?

Answer: We are not at that level yet but we will get there. The County is, however, adding countdown pedestrian signals to show how much time remains available to get through an intersection.

Comment: Consider access for bikes to the Kennesaw Battlefield.

Question: There is aggressive annexation in surrounding counties. This affects our city and county roads. Barrett Parkway is now annexed into the city so the city can do things that circumvent what the county prefers. How do you plan with so many variables?

Answer: The Comprehensive Transportation Plan will provide a means for dialogue about such issues. This will go a long ways towards addressing the need for better access management on Barrett Parkway, for example, as well as in other key corridors. I hope that with this planning process we can agree on access management plans that we all will follow.

Comment: We need to do more to eliminate the need for a vehicle to go places. We will have to find a way to avoid the need for a car to make every trip.

Question: How do we improve public transportation? With good public transportation, you will be able to go to some places without a car.

Answer: Many citizens have expressed an interest in improving transit with greater frequency, longer hours, and a larger fleet. Different kinds of new services have been discussed spanning the horizon from fixed guideway rail, to trolleys, to more bus service, to commuter rail. The study will look at alternatives and will recommend projects that are feasible and affordable. Some users want to see a bus every 10 minutes throughout the CCT network, but that will require a lot of new buses at a considerable cost. Some areas will be difficult and very costly to serve because of their low density or circuitous road network. We are planning for 25 years so what is not possible now may be possible in the future. We need to determine what the need is now and what it will be in 2030 and where the greatest need will be. We cannot continue to rely on single occupancy vehicles (SOV) alone for transportation.

The audience was asked to react to the following questions?

Question: Where is more transit needed in the northwest area?

- Busby Parkway at Chastain Road - There is a CCT Park Ride lot but no safe way to walk or bike there – you must drive.
- There are at least 10 dense pockets in Vinings and Mableton and Paulding County now, all are sources of people who go to work daily filtering into I-575 and I-75. Need trolleys to run around the cities all the time picking up and delivering people to a bus hub where 10 lines intersect going to various places.
- US-41 is the site of new major dense activity centers of housing and commercial. Build a rail from US-41 to Atlanta and from US-41 to Town Center
- Density will be increased if the infrastructure is increased.



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- Dense population centers exist in Town Center, US-41 and Cumberland. Strengthen the infrastructure in these corridors rather than create new ones.
- Provide circulators in concentrated areas and connect them to main transit lines.
- There is no place to park at the park-ride-lots – need to expand CCT or other ways to get to park-ride lots rather than having to drive (i.e. trolley).

Question: Where would you put transit?

- Wade Green has no transit and it is the heart of a populated area.
- Use the rail lines from vacant depots. Must figure out how to put passenger service on freight lines.

Question: How many of you would be willing to make multiple transfers before arriving at your destination?

- I would not like to take a bus headed home, drive in the opposite direction of travel and then pick up in the same congestion on my last segment of trip home.

Question: What are some possible solutions to relieve congestion?

- Employers should consider flextime.
- Ride share with co-workers. People who work late must be able to get service. Some employers have guaranteed ride home programs.
- Plan to have expressway through downtown Atlanta. ARC established cross regional arteries – a grid system is effective but we do not have it. Improve corridor to establish a grid system.

Question: What are we missing in our work so far?

- Counties do not work together in terms of transportation – Dallas Highway is an example. (Response: Every county and city we hear is doing the same thing to improve mobility. A study is underway jointly with other jurisdictions to improve mobility (i.e. Cobb and Paulding to provide transportation solutions for the 15,000 new planned development growth that will affect Cobb). Progress is being made.)
- Active and passive green space – is there currently any mechanism to preserve green space, places to walk dogs, etc?

Question: What are additional ways you suggest to reach out to others in the community?

- Change times of the meetings – getting home from being in traffic all day
- Add Saturday meetings

As the meeting was concluded, participants were encouraged to visit the project website, phone, email, and mail comments on the study.

Written Comments

1. While I was delighted to see CCT Express bus service extended to Canton, the trip time (often greater than 1.5 hours) is simply too long. I am moving to Kennesaw.

2. I am very interested to know that there are people out there thinking about land use planning and transportation issues. Issues that are important to me include preserving green space and



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being able to walk and bicycle around to different counties. Given that I work downtown, I would also like to have a better commute and more transportation options – not just to work, but also to the airport, theaters, museums, etc. I would also like more specific information about the modeling scenarios (assumptions made and how that might affect the results).